

polish by dramaqueenminyard

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Angst Free Zone, Coming Out, Dialogue Heavy, Fluff, Nail Polish, Other, Polyamory, bonding over nail painting, everyone still calls her el, this is just nancy getting to know her little brother's bf and gf

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Summary:

“Get tired of the boys?” Nancy asked, opening the door wider to invite her into the room.

El smiled toothily and dug into one of her deep pockets. Her slender hand emerged with her findings- a little black bottle of nail polish.

Or, El is a trendsetter, Mike isn't going to look punk rock, Will deserves soft things, and Nancy thinks about polyamory, though not for the first time.

polish

EL

Nancy Wheeler has had a long day.

She's had a lot of those, this year, with the pressure of school and the remnants of monster fighting looming over her. She'd cried in Jonathan's car on the way home, thankful to have someone she could be herself in front of.

Someone she could be weak in front of.

Dropping her bag on the chair by her door and pulling her hair up out of her eyes feels like being set free. Here, in the sanctuary of her bedroom, similar to the sanctuary of Jonathan's car, she can relax.

The clatter of footsteps in the hallway breaks her contemplation. At first, she thinks it might be Mike, but his footsteps don't sound like that. These are clunky, like whoever it is must be wearing heavy boots- El. Her younger brother's girlfriend's style had evolved into something of a conglomeration, mixing her black jackets and heavy boots with Nancy's hand me down floral dresses and her dark, smudgy eyeliner with soft and oversized sweaters.

She was wearing one of those now, her hand paused in reaching up to knock as Nancy opens the door. El still hesitates about contact sometimes, clumsy and unsure of herself. It makes Nancy want to remind her that her door is always open, metaphorically and literally.

"Get tired of the boys?" She asked.

El smiled toothily and dug into one of her deep pockets. Her slender hand emerged with her findings- a little black bottle of nail polish.

Nancy thought about asking why El hadn't gotten Hopper or Joyce- or Will, for that matter... he could probably do a better job- to paint her nails, but refrained. She was flattered, really.

The girls settled down face to face on her bed, El swinging her boot-clad feet back and forth. Nancy took one of her hands and inspected

her nails. They were far shorter than Nancy's and a little uneven. "Can I file them?"

"File?" El repeated, tilting her head. She was probably thinking about the cabinets filled with papers in her dad's office.

"I'll show you." She rummaged through her bedside drawer and found her nail kit. Far more gently than she ever had been with her own hands, she filed her nails into a curve and pushed back her cuticles. El watched all of this with laser like focus. By the time Nancy uncapped the little bottle, her swinging feet had ceased their movement.

Nancy painted her nails in steady, even strokes. The dark shade stood out against her pale skin strikingly.

"So..." Nancy moved onto another nail. "How are things with Mike?"

She remembered herself at their age, and the way she'd regarded romance. Those kids had something special, she was sure of it.

Close, even, to the feelings she and Jonathan have for each other.

"Good." El said. She opened her mouth as if to say more but stopped.

"What is it?"

"Secret." She tilted her head, considering. "But friends don't lie."

"You don't have to tell me." Nancy said quickly, though burning with curiosity. El nodded, and that was that.

"Be careful not to mess them up while they're wet!" She called after her and she bounded away to show the boys.

MIKE

Sometimes, Mike came into her room just to annoy her. It seemed that way, at least. Lately, it hadn't bothered her as much. An annoying Mike meant a safe, not being attacked by an otherworldly creature Mike.

It was with this attitude she faced him on a peaceful Sunday night. He didn't bother knocking, just strode in and flung his increasingly lankier limbs on the foot of her bed. Nancy glanced up from her book, found him not looking at her but instead at the little black bottle of polish El had left behind.

"Did you like El's nails?"

He jerked his gaze toward her. "Yeah."

She considered this reaction, observed the way he was now looking down at his own nails.

"Do you... want me to do yours?"

Mike fidgeted with the hem of his sweater. "You don't think it's weird?"

Nancy reached over and ruffled his hair, and for once Mike didn't put up a fight. "No way. I think it's punk rock."

Mike rolled his eyes, but obediently held out his hand when she motioned for it. "You have to keep still or it won't look good."

He didn't watch her as closely as El. His gaze drifted around the room, his fingers wiggling when he got particularly distracted. Nancy ordered him to keep still each time with sisterly annoyance.

"El told me something interesting the other day."

Mike hummed in response, his fingers wiggling a little as he did.

"She said the two of you had a secret." Nancy had already run through a million possibilities of what it could be, from more hidden kisses to trouble with the Upside Down. She knew it was neither of those things by Mike's answering nervous laugh.

Now, she really wanted to know.

"I don't know how you'll react." He admitted quietly.

"You and El haven't... done anything you're too young to do, right?"

“No!” The tips of his ears turned pink. “It’s nothing like that. It’s... Will.”

“Will?” How did her boyfriend’s little brother cause Mike and El to have a secret?

“I’m sort of... also his boyfriend.”

Nancy’s eyes widened. “And El knows? She’s okay with it?”

Mike got the same dreamy look he always did with El, except now she would relate it to Will as well. “Yeah, they’ve been so great about it.”

Nancy thought about sitting with Jonathan in his car and then sitting with Steve in his and thought yeah, she got it.

“I’m happy for you.” And she smiled at him, a genuine, loving smile, and he smiled back.

He wrinkled his nose as he observed his finished nails - “Kinda streaky, don’t you think?”- and got a splatter of paint on his cheek for his troubles.

WILL

Of all of Mike’s friends, Nancy figures she knows Will the least, which shouldn’t be so after years of him being around for Mike and the fact that he’s her boyfriend’s little brother. But neither of them had gone out of their way to get to know each other.

This made it all the more surprising when he tentatively knocked on her door.

“Jonathan isn’t here yet.” She told him, careful to sound kind and not like an aloof older sister. Sometimes, Steve picked Will up to play D&D when Jonathan had to work, and Will would come looking for him when it was time to leave.

“I know.” His gaze stayed stuck on the carpet.

“Do you need something?” It was easy to be gentle with Will the sweet boy who’d survived so much, who her brother was dating, and her boyfriend loved more than anything.

She sort of expected him to ask if Mike had told her about them, but instead he held up his hand.

“Oh, okay.” She was going to have to buy more polish if this continued. Mike had come back for a touch up, but El preferred the chipped look.

It struck her that Will wasn’t much of a dark color person. She pulled her handful of polishes in shades of cream, red, and pink out of her drawer and sat them beside the black on its now constant bedside table spot. His eyes dragged over each of the colors, but ultimately he chose black. She could almost see him working through exactly how much of a freak he was okay with his classmates considering him.

“To match El and Mike.”

“Of course.”

By the state of his nails, Nancy figured he bit them. The polish would help with that, at least.

“No one’s giving Mike any shit about his, right?”

Will shrugged. “No more than usual.” They, as a group, tended to be picked on regardless of nail polish. It was nice to know that Mike had friends who would stand by him through it anyway.

“Kids are jerks.”

“Not just kids.”

“No, not just kids.”

“Mike told you, didn’t he?”

Nancy startled, but recovered quickly.

“He did. Was that okay?”

“It was his secret too.”

“You haven’t told Jonathan?”

“He...” Will frowned, and Nancy suddenly regretted asking. “He knows I... like boys, but he doesn’t know about Mike.”

“He won’t mind, you know.”

“It’s hard to explain. Me and Mike and El. Don’t you think it’s weird?”

“No.” She answered honestly. “And neither will Jonathan.”

By the time she was done with his nails, Jonathan was pulling up in her driveway.

“Thanks.” Will said, and he was looking at the nails but maybe meaning, just a little bit, the conversation.

“Any time. Oh, and Will- don’t let Mike mess those up trying to hold your hand, okay?”

He smiled at her with pink dusting his cheeks. “I won’t, I promise.”

Author’s Note:

exysapphics on tumblr, come say hi!